

The New Michigan Merit Exam:

WHAT IT IS, WHAT IT MEANS — AND WHAT IT OFFERS

In March 2007, Michigan high school students said goodbye to the MEAP (Michigan Educational Assessment Plan) and hello to the Michigan Merit Exam (MME). Unlike the MEAP, this new test not only combines items from several tests, it will save students and families time and money. The exam will provide students with:

- A free ACT college entrance exam score that can be used to apply to college. In other words, you no longer have to pay to have your child take the ACT. Students will be allowed one free re-take of the MME if they did not qualify for the Michigan Promise scholarship.
- A free WorkKeys assessment that connects work skills, training, and testing to improve students' education and job opportunities.
- Michigan assessments that measure what students know that parents, educators and employers say is important in core subject areas and not covered in the ACT and WorkKeys.

Why is taking the test important? That's a good question. And there's a good answer.

State assessments, like the MEAP tests for younger students and the Michigan Merit Exam for high school students, provide a way to measure all Michigan students in the same subject, at the same time. The tests provide valuable information to parents on their children's academic progress.

The MME also provides teachers with important information about how their students are doing and assists teachers in getting struggling students the academic support they need. All of this will help students get a better education and succeed in college or the workplace.

For students in the Class of 2008 and beyond, taking the Michigan Merit Examination will ensure they are eligible for the \$4,000 Michigan Promise scholarship which can be used to pay for college or technical and trade schools. Students who pass the MME mathematics, reading, writing and science components, with a score of 1100 or more, will qualify for early installment payments versus a lump sum payment after they complete their sophomore year with a 2.5 grade point average or better. Students in the Class of 2007, can qualify for the scholarship based on the MEAP.

To help students prepare for the Michigan Merit Exam, the state is offering students free ACT and WorkKeys prep online courses through Michigan Virtual High School. In addition, they are also offering subjects on the Michigan Merit Exam not covered on the ACT. Please visit www.mivhs.org.

While it is a state requirement for students to take the Michigan Merit Exam, it is not a state requirement for students to graduate.

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Accommodations will be possible to help students with disabilities or students who are still learning the English language. To find out more about these accommodations, contact the school counselor.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

While, sometimes we may doubt if our children are paying any real attention to what we are saying, research shows that parents are among the most influential people in a teenager's life — especially when it comes to educational and career choices. Parents can help -- here's how:

- Visit the Michigan Department of Education Assessment web page at www.mi.gov/mme with your child to obtain practice tests and other valuable resources.
- Make sure students attend school regularly. Remember, tests do reflect children's overall achievement. The more effort and energy a child puts into learning, the more likely he/she will do well on tests.
- Encourage students to take challenging courses like Chemistry and Algebra II that are included in the exam.
- Provide a quiet, comfortable place for studying at home.
- Give your child a well-rounded diet. A healthy body leads to a healthy, active mind.
- Make sure your child doesn't "cram" the night before — cramming increases anxiety which interferes with clear thinking.
- Ensure they get a good night's sleep.
- Don't judge your child on the basis of a single test score. Test scores are not perfect measures of what a child can do.